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American Research Center In Egypt, Inc.

NEWSLETTER



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AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT, INC.

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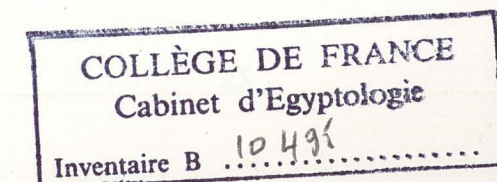
THE BENACHI COLLECTION OF STAMPED AMPHORA HANDLES

Though this is the first notice to readers of the Newsletter, actually since May 1964 the Center has had a share in a project of first importance in the study of Ptolemaic Egypt and its trade relations with contemporary Mediterranean states. This project is the classification, and installation in the museum of Alexandria, of the most notable of all collections of stamped handles. Such handles are fragments of stamped commercial containers made of earthenware, and the stamps on the handles are control stamps, impressed before firing, current chiefly in the great period of the ancient port city of Alexandria, from the latter 4th to the 1st century B.C., and, within that period, sometimes very closely datable. The containers were largely made for the transport of wine, but certainly re-used in ancient Egypt for every sort of fluid or semi-fluid commodity, as we know from many mentions in papyri.

The collection is that of Lucas Benachi. Gathered over some forty years, by 1963 it included about 66,000 pieces, more than twice as many as in any other collection of this material in the world. Probably 95 per cent of it derives from right in or near Alexandria, although some pieces were picked up at various sites in the Western Desert, in the Fayum, etc. A very keen amateur, Mr. Benachi had sorted his own collection to a remarkable extent. Further, he had given all kinds of help to me and my two Athenian assistants when we investigated and partially recorded the Alexandrian stamped handle collections in 1955. Thereafter he had kept us abreast of new acquisitions by a large correspondence, in particular by making and sending many thousand excellent rubbings of the stamps, which greatly enriched our files at the Agora Excavations in Athens.

The Benachi handles have all been stored in the basement of a villa belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Antony Benachi, the collector's parents. Though without much enthusiasm for the material, the elder Benachis were unfailingly kind and hospitable to those working on it. By 1962, however, both were in precarious health, and their son made a formal gift of the collection to the Musée Gréco-Romain of Alexandria. By the wish of the museum director as well as by that of the collector, the handles from the various kinds of amphoras--products of Thasos, Rhodes, Knidos and other ancient Mediterranean centers--were to be put into the best possible order before their transfer. From the point of view of research also, it was most desirable that the basic records and studies, including essential photography, take place while the material was still informally accessible in a private house, where working hours can be much less limited than in any museum however well-disposed.

Since 1962 I have therefore pressed forward the preparation for transfer of the handles to the Museum, as and when I could find time and assistance of various sorts, and as and when the Museum was able to construct the necessary cabinets to take the classified



material. During four working periods in 1963-1965, sections of this material have been moved as they became ready, and by August 1965, the following handles had been installed in the Museum:

Rhodian	4,451
Knidian	5,360
Koan	1,345
Roman	727
Thasian	149
Chian (of Hellenistic date) ca.	100
Pamphylian	547
Nikandros Group	109
Petos Group	65
unclassified	<u>1,004</u>
ca.	13,857

To these listed handles from stamped amphoras, add 230 smaller stamped handles mostly from narrow-necked jugs or lagynoi, and mostly Rhodian. The total figure is then well over 14,000. Readers whom the listed names make curious, or who wish to know a little about amphoras in general, may like to look at the illustrated pamphlet Amphoras and the Ancient Wine Trade (1961), one of a series of picture books published by the Excavations of the Athenian Agora.

Here a supplementary list will adjust the above figures to serve as statistics of the collection and at the same time to indicate the job that remains to be done. The following are stamped handles still at the Benachi villa:

Rhodian	probably more than	50,000
Knidian	perhaps	600
Chian	perhaps	30
Pamphylian	about	50
unclassified	about	200
in various small classes	about	<u>410</u>
remaining non-Rhodian total, about		1,290

Of the non-Rhodian, certainly less than 1000 more are to be transported to the Museum, since the stamps on the greater part of the remaining Knidian are illegible, and these handles should be discarded, perhaps buried. Knidian still for transport include formerly mislaid items now come to light, plus late sortings from the "unclassified," plus a certain number of which the stamps, though at present not fully legible, are seen not to be duplicates of any types in our established repertory. Chian and Pamphylian figures are of the contents of final drawers in the two series, which include some handles drawn from the Unclassified and still to be given category numbers. The remaining unclassified handles are stamped with devices, monograms or short abbreviations; from these after study some will be sorted away into classes. As to the "various small classes" cited at the end, these mostly need further definition, and some items will revert to Unclassified, while others will be added from the same. Probably two to three weeks will be needed to put in order the residue of non-Rhodian groups and tie up loose ends. I had hoped to finish this task in 1965, but the organization of the work on the Rhodian handles, and the check and study of its results, left little time to be spent on other classes.

Priority was given to the Rhodian class in the summer of 1965 because two undergraduate volunteers were available, Philippa Wallace of the University of Toronto and J. Peter Strang of Amherst. Working respectively for three weeks and about five and a half weeks,

they demonstrated that intelligent persons armed with a knowledge of ancient Greek and a *raisonnée* list of the names known in Rhodian stamps, but having at start no familiarity with the material, can quickly reach a level where they cover an average of 200 stamps per eight-hour day, identifying the names in the majority and marking these with the corresponding numbers from the list. As to "the majority": in this test period there was about 89 per cent success in decipherment; but this figure is not too significant, since it would depend much on the selection of material covered.

What to try to cover was on this occasion a primary matter to decide, since our time was short in the face of some 55,000 Rhodian handles. I learned that the Museum would be able to start at once making us three new cabinets with a total of 300 drawers, thus providing storage space for about 12,000 more handles. More or less on exhibition in the basement workroom at the Benachi house - covering tables and cabinet-tops, deeply drifted on open shelves, as well as filling a certain number of drawers--were Rhodian selections made over the years by the collector, including a fair alphabetical sequence of potters' names, groups of stamps with a device in common, collected handles of particularly early and particularly late shape which thus date the names in their stamps, and many impressions that were especially fine or puzzling or otherwise interesting so that we had corresponded about them. I hoped that these would not add up to more than the 12,000 to be accommodated in the three cabinets soon to be finished; and that the young people would manage to cover all or nearly all of the exhibition pieces. By this time, both of the elder Benachis had died, and the disposition of the house was uncertain. It might well become necessary to take the bulk of the Rhodian handles to the Museum unnumbered; the collector's sorting would not survive such a move; it was worth while to take advantage of what expedited our task (such as his alphabetical series of potters) and to keep accessible by our numbers and available drawer-storage the many items of special interest.

In fact, we did clear most of the surfaces of exhibition, and 9,053 handles were given numbers according to the names found in their stamps, and laid in order in drawers; another 1,145 had to be laid aside as illegible for now. The one part of the Benachi Rhodian of which we made a virtually complete coverage was the mass of handles of obviously early shape, i.e., we went through the storage containers of these (sorted out by the collector) as well as those on view on the shelves. Since early Rhodian stamped handles have bearing on current studies of early Hellenistic chronology in general, they need to be accessible as fully as possible, even to the extent of providing negative evidence.

We thus covered rather less than a fifth of the Benachi Rhodian, but a well-chosen fraction for completeness of name-representation and for the rounding up of interesting pieces, while the earliest handles have been gathered comprehensively.

The marked handles were sorted numerically by the Museum's technician Idris Ahmed Suleiman. The numbering separates the two series of names which appear on Rhodian amphoras, i.e., fabricants (potters) from eponyms (dating authorities), and within each series assembles handles bearing the same names. Sub-numbers in the fabricant series set apart different styles of stamps which often mean two persons of different dates though with the same name.

The lists themselves, long-needed, were pushed to the ends of their alphabetical sequences for use on this job, which could not be started without them. In principle, not only are fabricant styles distinguished (see above), but, so far as possible, for each individual who has been singled out an approximate date is proposed. For dates

and styles, as for established names, the basis was provided by our large files at the Athenian Agora; these cover the finds from many sites, though none other as numerous as the Benachi collection; they include much chronological evidence.

The summer's project, sponsored by the Center, thus forced the previous completing of the actual lists of names; it then tested these lists, and tested also the accuracy and usefulness in the field of the chronological, etc, annotations on them. As to these latter, there is no further question: where they were lacking because time had not permitted such study of all the names, we found ourselves definitely at a loss in making identifications, and I was obliged to make a tentative sorting on the spot, to separate as well as possible various different potters of the same name. A certain number of mistakes in marking and numerical sorting were of course picked up. For the rest, no new names were found, and little revision of chronology was suggested by a look at the handles, although, save for the earliest and the latest, most had been known to me only through rubbings of the stamps.

The 4,451 Rhodian handles which have been installed at the Museum are those on which fabricant names have been identified. These were all checked, and by reference to them the fabricant list as a whole was checked. A reference series of fabricant stamps for the Museum is now contained in 76 accessible (lower) drawers; from this series duplicates and near-duplicates have been weeded and placed in 31 supplementary drawers skied in the less useful part of the cabinet but available for special study.

On about 4,600 handles, eponyms' names were identified during this work period, and the handles marked and sorted accordingly. Of these, 1,442 were checked, and the drawers (37) were put in final order, save for a probable small number of additions to be expected from the correction of errors in marking and sorting to be found in the remaining drawers. This brings us through the name Aristratos (Rhodian eponym no. 60 in the new list). None of this eponym series has been installed in the Museum as yet, but all the drawers, checked and unchecked, a total of I think 116, have been retained in the large basement of the villa. I hope to complete the check of the already identified eponym handles, together with the check of the eponym list itself, in this convenient place; two to three weeks will be needed

An edition of both lists should then be published. They will be a convenience to the many who find Rhodian stamped handles in excavations, as well as an essential source for various kinds of Rhodian studies.

One of the first practical uses of the controlled lists should be the identification of the names in the 45,000-odd Rhodian stamps which will remain after I have completed the project of 1965; and the marking and sorting of the handles according to the lists. It is very good news that this task is to be undertaken by Miss Barbara Turziniski, graduate student at Harvard University, and newly appointed Fellow of the Center for 1966-1967. Since Mr. Benachi has managed for the present to keep the basement rooms available for study of the collection (by special arrangements with tenants), I hope that Miss Turziniski may be able to complete the classification of this collection while it remains at the villa, where the work can be done much more economically and conveniently than will be possible at a later time.

The Center's support of the study of this collection was preceded by two grants for the same general purpose from the Penrose Fund of the American Philosophical Society. In reports published on work done with the help of these grants, I have been glad to acknowledge the invariable courtesy and helpfulness of the Directors of the Musée Gréco-Romain, Dr. Victor Guirguis (in 1955) and Dr. Henry Riad (in 1962-1965) as well

as much attention and cheerful cooperation from the rest of the Museum staff including Mr. Youssef Hanna the present second in command. The work has been greatly lightened and forwarded by the attitude of welcome and appreciation shown by these and also by more remote Egyptian authorities. I signal this attitude by quoting two letters signed by the Governor of Alexandria, Mohamed Hamdi Achour, and both dated May 30, 1963. The French text is a translation of the Governor's Arabic, made by Dr. Riad, and received at the same time as the originals.

Cher Monsieur Benachi,

Je suis très heureux de vous exprimer mes plus sincères remerciements pour votre désir d'offrir à notre Musée Gréco-Romain une collection d'anses d'amphores antiques.

Ce noble geste qui vous fait choisir notre Musée pour y conserver la précieuse collection qui fait l'objet de votre donation, mérite toute notre appréciation, celle des savants et des chercheurs et l'admiration de nos concitoyens.

La ville d'Alexandrie, le Musée et ses visiteurs se rappelleront toujours ce qu'ils vous doivent.

Les formalités nécessaires pour l'acceptation de votre donation seront prises incessamment.

Avec mes remerciements renouvelés, veuillez agréer, Cher Monsieur Benachi, l'assurance de ma haute considération.

Mademoiselle,

Je suis heureux de vous présenter tous mes remerciements pour avoir bien voulu exprimer votre disposition à classer les anses des amphores qui ont été offertes par Monsieur Lucas Benachi au Musée Gréco-Romain, et cela à titre gracieux.

On reconnaît bien là la noblesse des savants qui oeuvrent et prodiguent leur temps et leurs efforts pour faciliter aux chercheurs leurs études, n'attendant, en retour, ni récompense ni remerciements, se contentant de la joie qu'ils éprouvent à présenter à l'humanité les fruits de leur science, pour qu'elle en fasse son profit largement et sans difficulté.

Avec l'immense appréciation des citoyens de la Ville d'Alexandrie et la mienne pour ce travail de haute valeur, je vous prie d'agréer, Mademoiselle, l'assurance de ma haute considération.

Members of the Center may recall that this gift to the Museum by a fellow-member was reported to them in December 1963 by Dawson Kian, see Newsletter 50, pp. 14-15.

Virginia Grace

AN EGYPTO-AMERICAN ENTENTE

Everyone who has visited the office of the Center in Cairo knows Mme. Atteya Habachi. In the following letter, Mme. Habachi, who has recently returned from a visit to the United States, gives a brief account of her impressions of our country. It is hardly necessary to add that "Madame," as she is called by those who know her well, has been associated with the Center for some seven years, and that she and her husband, Labib Habachi, a well-known Egyptologist, have most cordially lent their knowledge of Egypt and its customs to members of the Center.

Cairo, 4 February, 1966

Dear Friends and Members of the large Family of the American Research Center:

On my return to my country, I hasten to give you an account of my wonderful trip to the United States. Thanks to the generosity of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and above all the kindness of Dr. Henry Fischer of that institution, my husband and I were invited to spend three months in New York. We arrived just in time for the ICOM meeting last September. The Committee had splendidly organized visits to museums, private collections, the World's Fair, and other points of interest, and thus furnished us the occasion not only to see the thousand-and-one wonders of New York but also to meet again many friends from all parts of the world. It is useless for me to try to express how overwhelmed I was by the richness and variety of collections, by the marvelous presentation of the objects shown in museums, by the unbelievable progress of science, and--even more by the kindness and hospitality of the American people.

After this introduction, I settled down to a more organized life. Labib was working on the Egyptian collections at the Metropolitan Museum, and I had time to see New York at my leisure, its wide streets, its shops, its libraries, its universities. I never ceased to wonder at the activity that was everywhere evident, at Columbia University, at New York University, at the Institute of Fine Arts. I was overwhelmed by the wide and profound culture of the professors, by the scope of the libraries, by the richness of the shops--above all, by the order and discipline of New Yorkers during the famous "Blackout." I could only conclude that the Americans are, beyond dispute, the pharaohs of modern times.

Afterwards, we traveled. We visited about 28 museums and 18 universities. We began with Washington, D.C. Then we went to Chicago to attend the annual meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt held at the University of Chicago. Next to Princeton; and then to Dublin, New Hampshire, where for the first time in my life I saw snow falling. We visited Providence and Brown University, Baltimore and its museums, Philadelphia, Kansas City, Columbia, Missouri, St. Louis, Cleveland, and finally Boston, with its extraordinary Museum of Fine Arts. There we found our great friend William Stevenson Smith, and in nearby Cambridge we saw the American headquarters of the Center, so ably directed by Mary Geiger. Later, we proceeded to the conquest of Texas, with its ranches and cowboys; there we had as cicerone a great friend of Egypt, Mr. McEver. Finally, we went to Canada, to Montreal, where I had the impression that

the third language of that bilingual city would soon be Arabic, in view of the great number of Egyptian immigrants we found there, and to Toronto, where, thanks to Dr. Williams of McGill University, our voyage was crowned by a trip to Niagara Falls.

I would need an entire book to record my impressions of this unforgettable trip . . . that I'll leave to Labib. Here I wish only to express our heartfelt thanks to all my husband's colleagues, to all our friends, for what they have done for us, especially to all those who so generously welcomed us to their homes in the course of our travels.

With warm regards and all good wishes from the shores of the Nile to all the fine people of the United States.

Atteya Habachi

LETTERS FROM UPPER EGYPT

The members of the Chicago Expedition who have contributed the following communications to the Newsletter need no introduction to our readers. The Editor wishes to express her gratitude to them for taking time out during a busy season to write of events in Upper Egypt.

Here and There in Thebes

Chicago House, 13 February, 1966

The work of the Epigraphic Survey continues much the same year after year--a slow and patient recording of the walls of temples and tomb chapels in facsimile line drawing and photograph. For several seasons the staff has been working on the High Gate before the mortuary temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu and on the Tomb Chapel of Kheruef, the Steward of Queen Tiy in the latter years of Amenhotep III and the early years of Amenhotep IV. Both of these projects are nearing completion. However, the editing of the two volumes will take some time, and it is not yet possible to give the date of their publication.

In recent years the Egyptian Department of Antiquities has been engaged in various projects of consolidation and clearance in the Theban region. The final exploration of the foundations of the north tower of the Third Pylon at Karnak necessitated the dismantling of the facing blocks which formed the east wall of the adjoining section of the Hall. Most of these have been reerected, and the face of the Third Pylon has been moved several feet to the east. For the first time, the remaining inscriptions of Amenhotep III on the face of this part of his pylon can be seen. These are only in the areas flanking the flag-pole niches, and the remaining space on the preserved face of the pylon is uninscribed. The stripping of the facing blocks from the north wall of the porch of the pylon revealed that this was decorated by Amenhotep IV with the traditional scene of the king smiting his enemies.

The west end of the west tower of the Ninth Pylon, which, for at least a century and a half, has seemed in danger of immediate collapse, is being dismantled preparatory to making it safe in a new consolidation. If possible the whole remaining tower will be taken down to explore the core for reused blocks. Various blocks of the immediate

predecessors of Haremhab, its builder, have been found; some may prove to be of considerable importance. The writer once saw Chevrier, with Lacau looking on, pull a block of the red quartzite shrine of Hatshepsut from the foundations of the east tower, and it may well be that others of importance are still concealed in the lower parts of the structure.

The removal of the mound of medieval Luxor has been progressing for some years, and it is now almost level with the riverside boulevard. The south end of the Avenue of Sphinxes, erected by Nechtenebo I, which once had trees in the spaces between the sphinxes, has been cleared from its beginning to the Markaz. Here it is already beyond the mound, and the northernmost sphinxes have lost their heads. This avenue went on a straight line to a like avenue, which came toward the river from the Temple of Mut at Karnak. The bases of the northern sphinxes are in the ditch that lies east of the road from the Temple of Khonsu to Luxor, and various fragmentary sphinxes have been unearthed from time to time in building operations. Robichon once suggested to the writer that this avenue follows the line of an ancient canal, down which the barks of the gods went to the Luxor temple during the Feast of Opet. This suggestion seems quite plausible on other evidence; but by the end of the Twentieth Dynasty the moving calendar of the ancient Egyptians would have brought the beginning of the feast to a time when the Nile was at its lowest point, and the canal, if it existed, would have been filled in at about this period.

In the clearance of the mound most of the pharaonic material so far found, except for stones removed from the Luxor temple, is late, but several statues of the Twentieth Dynasty and some fragments going back to the Middle Kingdom have come to light. Except immediately in front of the Luxor temple the pharaonic levels have not been reached, and the present high level of the ground water during the inundation has so far made deeper excavation impractical. The lowering of the high levels of the river, which may follow the full utilization of the High Dam, possibly will free the forepart of the temple and the avenue from water in the future.

Only two excavations are at present continuing on the west side of the Nile--the work of clearance of the temple of Thutmosis III at Deir el-Bahri and the exploration of the Eleventh Dynasty tomb chapel of General Intef. The work on the tomb of this official, who lived under Mentuhotep II (Nebhetepre), is now in its fourth season, carried on by the German Archaeological Institute under the direction of Jurgend Setgast, assisted by Dieter Arnold.

A portion of this tomb, No. 386, situated in Asasif to the east of that of Kheruef and of Petamenope, was known to Wilkinson, but its full extent has been discovered only by this excavation. It is very similar in plan to that of Djar, No. 366, but the courtyard is better preserved. On the remaining pillars are some very remarkable scenes. One shows river boats with warriors about to spring ashore, some apparently already shooting arrows at the enemy. The most unusual scene shows the investment of a fortress, evidently in the north and perhaps even in Palestine-Syria, to judge by the light skin of the defenders and captives. Against the fort the Egyptians have erected a siege tower which has wheels on its far side. Perhaps these assisted it to be brought into position.

The experts of the expedition have treated these wall paintings and have replaced fragments, so that the composition now stands out clearly. The German Institute is to be congratulated on this remarkable discovery and on the measures taken to protect these unique records. It would be well if similar methods of cleaning and preservation could be used on other ancient Egyptian tomb paintings.

In the present season the excavators are working on the clearance of the court before the portico. This was filled in by Thutmosis III when he built the causeway to his Deir el Bahri temple. The causeway was used in Saite time for other tombs, some of which entered the older portico.

Two seasons back the Swiss Institute, under Herbert Ricke and Gerhard Haeny, investigated the plan of the rear portion of the great mortuary temple of Amenhotep III. Now Haeny has returned for a final check and a look into various fragments from this temple built into the temple of Khonsu at Karnak. One can expect from these experts in ancient Egyptian architecture considerable light on the greatest mortuary temple ever built in the Theban district.

After a chilly winter there are some signs that warmer weather is on the way. Those of us who live in unheated rooms will welcome it. One wonders what the ancient inhabitants did in the cold weather - one seldom finds any indication in the ancient records that they suffered from the cold.

The dedication of the reconstructed temple of Abu Simbel took place on January 26th. The work there has been done with remarkable care, and it can be expected that the reconstruction will give a close resemblance of the original.

Charles Francis Nims

Hatshepsut's Temple

The tourist visiting Queen Hatshepsut's mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri may be somewhat disappointed in not being permitted to ascend the second ramp. The reason for this restriction is the program of restoration being carried out by Polish archaeologists and architects under the direction of Mr. Leszek Dabrowski in conjunction with the Department of Antiquities. At present much of the effort is being devoted to the fitting together of the Osiride statues of the queen that were engaged to the pillars of the portico. Since many of the pieces are lost, stone cutters will be employed to complete the statues, following a model carefully executed last season by a skilled Polish sculptor. To the casual observer it may seem that the restoration of the temple is proceeding at a slow pace, but there is no shortcut in such an undertaking. Before blocks can be installed in their proper position, careful reconstruction must be executed on the drawing boards in the architects' studio at old Metropolitan House.

After five years of excavating, or clearing, to be more precise, Polish archaeologists expect that in about a month's time work of uncovering the remains of the Thutmose III temple will be completed. This structure was built south of Hatshepsut's temple and located on an even higher level in the Deir el-Bahri bay. In charge of this phase of the Polish endeavor is Dr. Jagoda Lipinska, a young archaeologist with an excellent memory. In an excavation of this sort, where as many as several hundred fragments of exquisitely painted raised relief may be brought to light in a single day, it is essential for the archaeologist not only to make an accurate record of the pieces uncovered in a day's work but also to be able to recall fragments excavated previously, so that joins may be made. Such piecing together of fragments is made especially difficult at this temple, because a major portion of it later became a factory for stone vessels, which were hewn from blocks stripped from the structure. Contiguous fragments may not be of the same provenience, nor do blocks discovered in association necessarily derive from the same wall of the original structure. Another complicating

factor is that both limestone and sandstone were used as building materials, and at present it is difficult to determine a rationale behind their employment in the temple walls.

According to Dr. Lipinska, this temple was begun late in the reign of Thutmose III and, to judge from the surviving reliefs and inscriptions, was dedicated to Amon. Only last week there was unearthed a very important block depicting the rudder and carrying-pole of a sacred bark, undoubtedly the portable bark of the Amon of Karnak. Beneath the carrying-pole are a number of divine standards, which frequently appear beneath the bark when it is at rest on a pedestal within the temple sanctuary. We can deduce that this temple probably served as the focal point of the divine procession made once a year by the Theban triad for the Feast of the Valley, the valley being the Deir el-Bahri bay, and that Thutmose III constructed a long causeway paralleling Hatshepsut's in order that Amon's sacred bark might be carried up from the plain to its sanctuary in the heart of that bay.

In addition to the magnificently painted reliefs that have come to light, a number of statues of the king have been discovered. The prize find of last season was a black granite statue of the seated king about two meters high. Although badly fractured in the destruction of the temple by boulders falling from above, the statue is certainly one of the finest that we have of Thutmose III, and with careful restoration it should become a major attraction in the Luxor museum, now in the course of construction on the site of the headquarters of the Department of Antiquities.

Much less fortunate was the fate of a statue of the god Amon, which had been deliberately smashed to bits by the Atonists during the time of Akhenaten. Only a few pitiful fragments of it were found, piously concealed in a hole in the floor of the sanctuary, presumably by ancient restorers of the temple. The Atonists also had sent their hatchet men to hack away those portions of Thutmose III's beautiful reliefs and texts that were offensive to the religion of Akhenaten, but under the sponsorship of Ramesses II an extremely fine program of restoring the painted reliefs was carried out. The care exercised by the Ramesside artists in carving and painting at this temple befitted the high quality of Thutmose III's original work. One interesting detail appears on a block whose inscription has been recarved. Beside the recut text is an ink rendering of the same text, which served as a guide for the ancient restorer.

It was probably during the reigns of Ramesses IV-VI that Thutmose's temple ceased to be a destination of the barks in the Feast of the Valley, for these three Ramesside rulers participated in the construction of a monumental temple located over the lower portions of the causeways of Thutmose III and Mentuhotep II. Although the processional way was thus blocked, the temple was still of importance to the people of Thebes, who in the late Twentieth Dynasty came there as pilgrims. The columns of the temple are inscribed with numerous hieratic graffiti, penned by men and women making supplications, principally to Hathor. "Do good, do good, O Hathor, mistress of Deir el-Bahri," writes a certain citizeness Temiu ("The Cat"). This is only a brief entreaty; most of the graffiti are considerably longer, and many contain dates from the reign of Ramesses IX.

In one case, between the legs of Amon (beautifully restored by Ramesses II's artists), a scribe of the treasury of the temple of Amon penned a graffito containing a fervent plea to the god depicted. The god's name is repeated three times; the writer requests that he be guarded and protected until he reaches the revered state (of death). In this example it seems that the petitioner was imploring the god Amon as represented

on the wall before his eyes. These visitors' inscriptions are currently being prepared for publication by Mr. Marek Marciniak, who has been working in consultation with Professor Černý.

Edward F. Wente

The New Assuan

In January I went to Assuan as a tourist. During previous visits I had been attached to expeditions connected with the recording of monuments in Nubia, and all I had seen of the famous High Dam, prime cause of all archaeological activity in Nubia, had been from the river as we passed on our way upstream. The first time, in 1961, I saw little more than a wide stretch of whitewash on the rocky shore some six miles above Assuan. It marked the spot where Nasser's dam was to be. Two years ago I went by as passenger on the dahabia of the American Research Center, on my unforgettably happy visit to the Gebel Adda excavations. That time the rocky shore was alive with huge earth-moving machines, tumbling masses of rock and rubble into the wide river, which appeared to swallow it so fast that no effort of man seemed likely ever to be able to succeed in blocking it. In one of the valleys I knew that the engineers were cutting a diversion for the water, to end in tunnels through solid granite leading to the turbines, but of this nothing was visible from a passing ship.

This time, as a tourist on shore, I wanted to see how the dam that I had seen start as a streak of whitewash had progressed. I knew, of course, that the internal diversion had been officially opened and the course of the Nile changed for the first time in its history by President Nasser and the Premier Krushchev. Yet I was astonished by the changes the Egyptians and Russians have wrought, not only in respect to the Dam, but to Assuan itself. This place is on the way to becoming the largest industrial center of the country, and they are already gearing it to the electric power that will flow from the High Dam generators in full spate in 1969. It is no longer the quaint little town it used to be, with its covered bazaars still selling real native goods, and its quiet river front.

The riverside road is all torn up, trees uprooted, buildings demolished to make place for a wide boulevard along the Nile. The old picturesque buildings of Assuan, low and suited to the landscape, are vanishing. In place of them there rise sheer white buildings many stories high, containing government departments, offices, and apartments for executives. At the back of the town are row upon row of new apartment blocks for workers and officials. The old Cataract Hotel still sprawls its comfortable unorganized architecture across the granite cliff of the cataract, but a New Cataract Hotel, gleaming white, with all modern luxuries, soars above it. On the northern tip of Elephantine Island an immense hotel is being built--a tower that blocks effectively the famous view of the tombs across the river.

Assuan will surely be a fine modern town in a few years' time, the pride of Egypt, but with the old-world charm that attracted visitors gone forever. Its streets today are dusty, noisy and perilous with buses bearing designation plates in Russian. For there are three thousand Russians living at present in Assuan--900 technicians and their families. It was Russia which provided finance and engineers for Nasser's great dam project when the Western powers refused it. The Russians, however, do not appear to use the opportunity of their presence to conduct any noticeable propaganda drive. Perhaps the prestige that naturally comes from a big job done well is sufficient. They keep much to themselves in the Russian town across the river, where they have their own substantial houses, shops, clubs, and movies.

I had the unusual experience of having a Russian car with a Russian driver come to the hotel to fetch me for a tour of the High Dam. This was because I was in the company of the Director of the Polish Archaeological Mission at Deir el Bahri, neighbors of ours at Luxor. Our guide was the Russian Consul himself, and it was amusing that the conversation had to be entirely in English--the only language common to the Russians and the Poles. That suited me. The consul spoke it well, and was friendly and informative. He also spoke Arabic fluently.

The dam, a vast embankment of rock and sand, stretches all the way across the river but is still at only half of its full height. Yet you can already see that the water is stacking up behind it, by observing the half-submerged villages on the shores of the growing lake, which will stretch 300 miles into Nubia. The whole project should be completed by 1969, a year before schedule.

After inspecting every part of the works, taking any photographs we liked, we were driven right across the Nile on the dam, to a hilltop where Kalabsha temple stands, re-erected after being moved from its original site some 30 miles upstream. The work has been so beautifully done by the West German engineers--the moving was a gift from their government--that the very air of antiquity seems to have been moved with the stones. Nearby I was delighted to see the little rock-cut temple of Beit el-Wali, saved from the flood and brought here by the Egyptian Service of Antiquities.

Assuan is changing rapidly, yet the charm of a sailboat trip among the rocky islands of the cataract has not been spoiled by the changes. It is hoped that it never will be.

Leslie Greener

NOTES FROM LOWER EGYPT

Mr. Bernard V. Bothmer, a Trustee of the Center who is at present in Egypt, has kindly supplied the following items for the Newsletter.

The Museum of Egyptian Antiquities

Dr. Mohsen el Khashab retired as of February 18 from the Cairo Museum and the Department of Antiquities. Much beloved by scholars all over the world, he combined the unique qualities of numismatist, Egyptologist, museum curator and excavator with much charm and profound knowledge. His position in the Cairo Museum will be taken by Dr. Abdel Qader Selim who has been promoted to full curatorship.

Dr. Mohammad Kamal el-Dine has been appointed Associate Curator at the Museum, and Abdel Hady el Khafif, a young Classicist, has been appointed Assistant. The latter was trained as a numismatist by Dr. El Khashab and catalogued some 3000 coins in the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria before coming to Cairo.

Italian Archaeologists in Egypt

The Italian Mission, under Professor Donadoni, has completed this year's campaign at Sheikh Ibada (Antinoe). They have brought to light a vast Predynastic cemetery on which they will be working for some time to come. Another Italian expedition, under

Dottorressa Edda Bresciani of the University of Pisa, is working at Medinet Madi at the southern edge of the Fayum. Their efforts have been crowned by the discovery of a fairly large number of Greek papyri. A Spanish mission, under M. Lopez of the College de France, has begun work at Behnasa (Heracleopolis) on the east side of the Fayum

Dr. Silvio Curto, head of the Egyptian Museum in Turin since the retirement of E. Scamuzzi, is in Cairo to arrange for the transfer of the XVIIIth Dynasty reliefs from Elesiya, which the Egyptian government has presented to Italy in recognition of that country's efforts in Nubia during the past seven years. The reliefs come from the rock chapel of Tuthmosis III, which will be rebuilt in the court of the Turin Museum to its original size of 8 m. square. The decoration is in low, not sunk, relief.

Tanis

The French Mission to Tanis, subsidized by the Commission des Fouilles, Institut de France, Paris, has resumed its exploratory work at Tanis in the Eastern Delta. In view of the gigantic efforts made in the past 100 years to clear this site, it will take at least a year or two to assess a highly complex situation, complicated by the lack of records of the earlier campaigns.

Saqqara

Messrs. Lauer and Leclant are busy at Saqqara on the pyramids of Pepy I and Tety. The former is being cleared from the top down, and the enormous blocks of the triple roof of the sarcophagus chamber have just been uncovered. The latter has been consolidated from the inside, and after the quarrying debris had been removed from the sarcophagus chamber, its north and south walls have been replaced by modern masonry. Still, the roofing blocks have been left in place and are being supported by heavy timbers. Tety's sarcophagus turns out to bear an inscription on the inside and has revealed a most intricate construction for the placing of the lid. The east and west walls of the chamber are in a perfect state of preservation, built from enormous slabs of limestone whose joints are hardly visible even today. The thousands of fragments of texts of the other walls are now being drawn to scale and joined, if possible, to other fragments in a storehouse in the northwest corner of the pyramid temple. It is amazing how many new texts are coming to light, which have not been recorded in Sethe's edition of the Pyramid Texts. The Tety Pyramid Temple, cleared many years ago in part and never properly surveyed nor published, is now being excavated in its eastern part. A fine doorway has been found on the east side in the central axis, leading to an anteroom which is closed off by a wall over two meters thick. This anteroom has an entrance only in the southeastern corner where a search is under way to find the beginning of the causeway; its course has thus far never been properly determined.

Later: Messrs. Lauer and Leclant, a few days before the latter returned to Paris, succeeded in clearing the roof of the chamber of the pyramid of Pepy I at South Saqqara and entered it for the first time since the eighties, when Maspero copied the texts, although at the turn of the century, someone from the German Embassy in Cairo must have been inside in order to make the paper squeezes for the Worterbuch of the Berlin Academy, on which Sethe's edition of the Pyramid Texts is based. At the

Tety Pyramid Temple an early Ramesside tomb with fine, now rather fragmentary, relief decorations has been found in the southeast corner, a little to the south of the recently discovered end of the causeway.

As reported in the papers some months ago, Mr. Ahmed Moussa, Inspector of Antiquities at Saqqara, discovered some additional tombs under and south of the Unas Causeway, one of them belonging to a goldsmith of the Old Kingdom. They remind one of Iruka-ptah, since their decoration is mostly painted, but unfortunately the former brilliance of the polychromy is much muted by salt, and the layer of gesso, to which the paintings had been applied, is flaking off.

Volume V of Lauer's Zoser publication has appeared in print; it is mainly concerned with inscriptions on stone vessels from the Step Pyramid Precinct.

Miscellaneous Notes

On January 13, 1966, died El Sayyed Abdurrahman Sadek, the well known antiquarian of Hehia, near Zagazig. His keen eye, interest and generosity saved many an important Delta document from oblivion over the years.

An Austrian expedition has applied for a concession to excavate the Ramesside residence at Qantir in the Eastern Delta. The land involved, however, is under cultivation and privately owned, and there may be a delay before it can be acquired by the Department of Antiquities prior to granting the concession.

Shafiq Farid, Director of Excavations in the Department of Antiquities, has resumed his dig at Tell Basta.

The Belgian Elkab Mission (De Meulenaere, Derchain, De Wit, Father Vermeersch) has left for home after a month's exploration of the site for which Belgium has held a concession many times for nearly half a century. This concession has been renewed, their house (originally the residence of Somers Clarke) near Elkab has been restored to them, with all its furnishings, books, and records, and the first full campaign will be undertaken this coming winter.

Madame Desroches-Noblecourt, Curator in the Egyptian Department of the Louvre and UNESCO's advisor to the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, has arrived in Cairo to arrange for the Tutankhamen exhibition to be held in Paris later this year. This will be a very extensive loan exhibition, far surpassing the twenty-six objects from the king's tomb shown in the United States a few years ago. It will include the famous gold mask of the boy-pharaoh, which thus far has been exhibited only once outside of Egypt, in Japan.

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